

INTRODUCTION

Wisconsin's plan is designed with the purposes of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant, described under Section 401 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), as its foundation. Wisconsin's TANF program seeks to provide the necessary employment and training services, including supportive services and financial incentives, for low-income parents to obtain permanent and stable employment with access to further training that will lead to career advancement.

The Wisconsin Works (W-2) program, from its inception, has been designed to assist eligible individuals in connecting to the workforce. The primary principle of the W-2 program is that individuals and their families can best achieve self sufficiency through employment. As the W-2 program has matured over the last nine years, W-2 has become more closely focused on strategies that effectively connect low income individuals to the workforce and how best to promote economic self-sufficiency by helping individuals secure and retain jobs and advance in the workforce.

The W-2 Contracts for 2006-09 were increased from the two-year period for the 2004-05 W-2 Contracts to a four-year-period in effect January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2009.

The Department of Workforce Development has taken a number of steps to improve operation of the W-2 program focused on better outcomes for families. Chief among the improvements for the 2006-09 W-2 contract cycle are changes for the delivery of services in Milwaukee County, where the largest population of the state's caseload resides. The service delivery changes separate W-2 functions: case management for employment and training; job development; and case management for Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Income (SSI/SSDI) eligibility. Different entities specializing in the delivery of certain W-2 services are designed to produce better outcomes for participants and stronger connections to employers.

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's (DWD's) direction for the 2006-09 W-2 program focuses on:

- Assisting W-2 program participants in successfully making what might be their initial connection to employment;
- Ensuring that participants strengthen connections to employment, short term training opportunities and career ladders;
- Providing employment stabilization services that ensure employment retention and rapid reattachment to employment if employment is lost;
- Providing assistance in obtaining federal SSI and/or SSDI for those participants who, even with possible disability accommodations for severe and multiple disabilities, are more appropriate for SSI/SSDI than employment;
- Performance standards focusing on successful participant outcomes in obtaining and retaining employment, enrollment in relevant job skills training, and eligibility for SSI/SSDI where appropriate;
- Emphasis on connections to local employers to expand job opportunities for W-2 participants that offer a career ladder and the availability of short-term customized training to make W-2 participants more ready for employment;
- Focus on job retention strategies to assure that when W-2 participants find a job, they are able to keep a job or quickly become re-employed if they lose the first job;

- Emphasis on providing workforce connection services in conjunction with the Wisconsin Job Centers and other workforce development programs, including close cooperation with the area Workforce Development Board; and
- Integration of service delivery methods with other family support systems, such as community support programs and child welfare programs, to better serve participants facing multiple challenges.

DWD encourages W-2 programs to provide services that are strengths-based, family-centered and respectful of participants' interests and goals. Building on the strengths and skills of individuals and families in assigned W-2 activities facilitates successful outcomes for families.

In addition to providing training and supportive services to the custodial parent(s) in the W-2 group, there are initiatives within Wisconsin's TANF program that seek to promote personal responsibility and career development among other family members. For example, non-custodial parents are offered work training and supportive services through the Children First program, empowering them to meet their children's as well as their own financial needs.

GENERAL PROVISION ASSURANCES

Under the TANF plan, with the exception of Safety Services and Child Welfare Prevention Services, Wisconsin will provide services to needy families at or under 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) with the level of services provided varying according to income and assets as outlined in the plan. For those programs that fall under the fourth purpose of the TANF program (i.e., Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families), there are no income limits in place.

The State ensures the following:

1. Wisconsin's TANF program is designed to serve all political subdivisions in the State (not necessarily in a uniform manner), provide assistance and services to needy families with (or expecting) children, and provide parents with job preparation, work and support services to enable them to leave the program and become self-sufficient.
2. The program will require a parent or caretaker receiving assistance to engage in work (as defined by the State) once the State determines that the parent or caretaker is able to engage in work, or once the parent or caretaker has received assistance under the program for 24 months (whether or not consecutive), whichever is earlier.
3. Parents and caretakers receiving assistance under the program shall be engaged in work activities in accordance with section 407.
4. Reasonable steps shall be taken to restrict the use and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance under the program attributable to funds provided by the federal government. Chapter 49 of Wisconsin State Statutes details the restrictions on disclosure of information for Wisconsin's TANF programs.
5. Goals shall be established and action taken to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on teenage pregnancies, and numerical goals shall be established for reducing the illegitimacy ratio of the State.
 - Wisconsin provides funding for projects to address adolescent pregnancy prevention, adolescent parent self-sufficiency, pregnancy counseling and adolescent parenting

skills. Based on results from currently funded programs and initiatives, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) in coordination with DWD developed the *Wisconsin Plan to Prevent Adolescent Pregnancy*. This plan focuses on three equally important key elements for all of Wisconsin's children and adolescents: health, nurturing and education.

- The *Wisconsin Plan to Prevent Adolescent Pregnancy* established goals and actions to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on adolescent pregnancies. Although the plan is based on abstinence, special areas of concern are subsequent pregnancies, child abuse and neglect, and sexual abuse/statutory rape.

The current goals of the plan are to decrease the percentage of Wisconsin youth who have had sexual intercourse from 39% in 2001 to 30% in 2010, and to increase the percentage of youth who will choose consistent and correct use of contraception from 76% in 2001 to 87% in 2010. This plan is in alignment with the State Public Health plan, Healthiest Wisconsin 2010.

- The Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Committee (APPC) is co-chaired by DWD and DHFS and is made up of public and private sector members from around the state. Representation includes provider agencies, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, the legal system, Wisconsin Medical Society, public health agencies, the faith community, private businesses, local government, teens and parents. Workgroups have been created to address specific areas of concern, including high-risk populations, and densely populated areas of the state. In 2005 APPC expanded its scope to include HIV/STD education and prevention efforts.
- The APPC supports abstinence and has developed abstinence clubs throughout Wisconsin high schools under the Wisconsin Abstinence Initiative for Youth (WAIY). To date, forty-seven (47) clubs have been formed and the goal is to develop one hundred (100) clubs throughout Wisconsin. To support the development of the clubs, DHFS maintains the WAIY website to provide information on starting an abstinence club, the club locations and contact information plus other resources to support a young person's decision to delay sexual activity. The link to the WAIY website is: www.dhfs.state.wi.us/waiy/
- During 2005 Youth Listening Sessions were hosted statewide by participant groupings – for example, sessions were hosted by: abstinence clubs; runaway shelters; bi-sexual, gay and lesbian support groups; Hispanic, African-American and high-risk youth. The purpose of the sessions was to give youth an opportunity to talk about reproductive information they need and want, how they want that information delivered and by whom. The results of these sessions will be compiled early in 2006 and will influence 2006 APPC activities.
- In 2004 and 2005 APPC hosted statewide educational teleconferences addressing the priority needs which were identified in a statewide survey with adolescent pregnancy prevention stakeholders. In addition to identifying priority issues, stakeholders also indicated that a platform for discussion and networking would be welcome. Teleconference results were very positive, and APPC plans to continue this practice and expand the number of participants per session in 2006.

- Although minor parents living outside of an adult supervised living arrangement are not eligible to receive cash assistance under W-2, W-2 agencies have been directed by DWD to put special emphasis on providing case management services to minor parents, regardless of their income, assets, or living arrangement. All minor parents are eligible to meet with a Financial and Employment Planner (FEP) and receive W-2 case management services. Case management may include discussions on family planning, money and time-management, career planning, and parenting and independent living skills. The FEP may also provide a minor parent with information regarding available child care services, high school and school-to-work preparation, community resources, and eligibility for food stamps, other food and nutrition programs and Medicaid. Eligibility determination for these other programs will be completed according to individual program eligibility rules.
 - W-2, through its policies, encourages both parents to delay having additional children until the family is more financially secure. There are several ways the W-2 program encourages the prevention and reduction of the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies for the adult population served by W-2: 1) Flat grants: Like employment, W-2 provides cash payments based on participation, not family size. If an individual fails to participate, his or her payment is reduced by \$5.15 per hour. 2) Family cap: W-2 does treat parents who have additional children while on assistance differently. Parents caring for a child under 12 weeks old may be eligible to receive, as a "short term, non-recurrent benefit," a stipend to cover their living expenses that does not carry a work requirement. However, parents receiving such payments are exempt from time limits only if the child is born less than ten months after the individual was first determined eligible for W-2 (or if the birth was the result of sexual assault or incest). 3) Case management: FEPs may counsel participants to delay subsequent births or provide referrals to family planning services.
 - As part of the Case Management Training Series, Wisconsin is providing a participant guide on Employment-Focused Family Planning. The base of information developed will continue to be utilized in W-2 to assist participants in making choices about their career and family, encourage the use of resources available to them and make appropriate referrals based on their needs. Each W-2 agency maintains a list of family planning referral agencies and health care providers which is available to all customers.
 - The Wisconsin Family Planning Waiver is a Medicaid program for women between the ages of 15 and 44 whose income does not exceed 185% of the poverty level. It covers selected family planning services, including free contraceptive services and supplies, initial family planning office visits, and tests and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases. The program is administered by DHFS.
6. A number of state and local initiatives are under way in Wisconsin to address the problem of statutory rape so that teenage pregnancy prevention programs are expanded in scope to include men. Examples of these efforts include:
- The "Real Men Respect" campaign, a public relations campaign intended to prevent sexual assault and promote healthy teen relationships. This campaign is led by DHFS in partnership with the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault. The campaign is targeted toward 13-17 year olds, with a primary focus on boys.

- Training and in-services to educators through the Department of Public Instruction on the topic of reporting requirements for sexually active adolescents.
- A video series called *Sexuality Attitudes and Awareness* is used to educate individuals on the legal issues and consequences of violating child sexual assault laws. The program is used with individuals who may benefit from the information as determined by the courts, a district attorney or a probation and parole officer.
- The Wisconsin State Legislature passed a law in 2001 that requires Child Protective Services (CPS) Agencies to refer all cases of suspected or threatened child sexual abuse to law enforcement. In turn, the law enforcement agency and CPS must coordinate the planning and execution of the investigation of the report. Any law enforcement agency that determines that criminal action is necessary must refer the case to the District Attorney for criminal prosecution. DHFS has developed a CPS standard that describes requirements and guidelines for collaborating with law enforcement agencies in reports of sexual abuse as well as reports of other forms of child maltreatment.